

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 04267 01 OF 02 132323Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 INR-05 L-01 SAB-01 SSO-00
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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PANAMA 4267

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, PN, PQ
SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS - CANAL ZONE LABOR

SUMMARY: LEADERS OF TWO PREDOMINANTLY PANAMANIAN-
CITIZEN CANAL ZONE UNIONS WENT TO WASHINGTON JUNE 10
FOR CONSULTATION WITH GOP NEGOTIATING TEAM. THIS
CREATED CONSIDERABLE DISQUIET AMONG REST OF CANAL ZONE
LABOR; AFL-CIO PANCOM SCHEDULED TO MEET JUNE 13 IN
WASHINGTON, AND THREE OTHER LABOR LEADERS LEFT JUNE
12 TO ATTEND. IN FACE OF TALK ABOUT A TREATY BEING
CONCLUDED SHORTLY, LABOR IN CANAL ZONE IS BECOMING
ALMOST DESPERATE FOR SOME MEANINGFUL INPUT TO THE
PROCESS--BUT AGREES THAT NO SINGLE ONE OF ITS LEADERS
COULD CREDIBLY SERVE AS LABOR'S SOLE INTERLOCUTOR.
END SUMMARY.

1. TWO LEADERS OF CANAL ZONE LOCALS OF AMERICAN FEDERATION
OF STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES
(AFSCME), AFL-CIO, WENT TO WASHINGTON JUNE 10 FOR
CONSULTATIONS WITH GOP TREATY NEGOTIATORS AT GOP EXPENSE.
THEY ARE LUIS ANDERSON, PRESIDENT OF LOCAL 907, AND
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 04267 01 OF 02 132323Z

PABLO KIRVEN, NVICE-PRESIDENT OF LOCAL 900. (PRESIDENT
MAUGE COULD NOT MAKE TRIP.) LOCAL 907 REPRESENTS
PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN EMPLOYEES OF U.S. MILITARY, LOCAL
900 PANAMANIAN CITIZEN PANCANAL EMPLOYEE.

2. GOP INVITATION WAS TENDERED AT A JUNE 9 MEETING WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER, LABOR MINISTER, HEALTH MINISTER

AND GOP LIAISON OFFICER WITH CANAL ZONE LABOR BALBINO MORENO. REPORTEDLY, IT WAS APPROVED IF NOT INITIATED BY TORRIJOS HIMSELF. GOP SPOKESMAN SAID US NEGOTIATORS WERE PRESSING VERY HARD FOR EXCLUSIVE US CONTROL OF LABOR RELATIONS (ALONG LINES INDICATED TO AFSCME BY US SIDE), BUT THAT GOP HAD RESISTED THIS IN THE PAST AND WOULD CONTINUE DOING SO. GOP POSITION, THEY SAID, WAS TO PROTECT PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN EMPLOYEES IN THE NEW TREATY, ITSELF, BASED UPON AN EXTENSIVE PAPER PREPARED BY AFSCME (COPY POUCHED AMAUR, ARA/PAN, 5/4/77). GONZALEZ-REVILLA SAID TORRIJOS WAS CONVINCED "YOU PEOPLE ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOW" ANYTHING ABOUT LABOR ISSUES; THUS THE INVITATION.

3. BRIEF PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS OF TRIP APPEARED JUNE 10-11. IN HIS WEEKLY COLUMN FOR "STAR AND HERALD" JUNE 12 (COPY POUCHED CAMAUR), AFSCME REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM SINCLAIR SAID INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT JERRY WURF AND SECRETARY-TREASURER WILLIAM LUCY HAD SAID THEY WOULD PROVIDE "ANY AND ALL ASSISTANCE" TO ANDERSON AND KIRVAN. SINCLAIR ALSO SAID THAT CONTINUOUS TRAINING PROGRAM AT ALL LEVELS (INCLUDING EXPANDED APPRENTICE PROGRAM) FUNDED FROM CANAL ENTITY BUDGET SHOULD BE PART OF ANY LABOR PROGRAM IN NEW TREATY; APPLICATION OF EO 11491 SHOULD BE STRONGLY OPPOSED; TREATY SHOULD INCLUDE A COMPREHENSIVE LABOR-MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENT DRAWING ON EO 11491, PANAMA LABOR CODE AND OTHER PATTERNS TO ACCOMMODATE PARTICULAR SITUATION.

4. TRIP HAS CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DISQUIET AMONG REST OF
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PAGE 03 PANAMA 04267 01 OF 02 132323Z

CANAL ZONE LABOR, BOTH US AND PANAMANIAN CITIZENS. AMERICANS SEE AFSCME AS READY TO SHORT-CHANGE US CITIZENS IN ORDER TO BETTER CONDITIONS OF PANAMANIANS. NMU, WHICH IS PREDOMINANTLY PANAMANIAN CITIZENS IS CONCERNED AT GOP TAKING AFSCME AS VOICE FOR PANAMANIANS WHILE NMU ACTUALLY HAS MORE OF THEM AS AFFILIATES. EVEN MORE, NMU IS ACUTELY CONCERNED THAT AFSCME WILL GRAB ALL THE CREDIT FOR ANY SUCCESS AND THAT IT WILL FORESTALL APPLICATION OF EO 11491. NMU (AND SOME US-CITIZEN UNIONS, INCLUDING CANAL ZONE CENTRAL LABOR UNION-METAL TRADES COUNCIL--CLU-MTC, THE AFL-CIO-SANCTIONED CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL FOR THE CANAL ZONE) FAVOR APPLICATION OF EO 11491.

5. AFL-CIO PANCOM (REPRESENTATIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF ALL AFL-CIO UNIONS WITH CANAL ZONE LOCALS) HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR SOME TIME TO MEET IN WASHINGTON JUNE 13. THREE LABOR LEADERS LEFT JUNE 12 TO ATTEND: ALFRED GRAHAN PRESIDENT, CLU-MT; CAPTAIN JOHN WILLIAMS, PRESIDENT, PANAMA CANAL PILOTS

ASSOCIATION; AND RENE LIOEANJI, REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NMU.
(ONLY LIOEANJI HAD PLANNED TO GO UNTIL THE AFSCME TRIP BECAME
KNOWN.) ALL THREE SAID THEY WOULD ALSO SEEK THROUGH AFL-CIO
NATIONAL TO IMPOSE A BIT OF UNION DISCIPLINE ON AFSCME AND
KEEP IT FROM TRYING TO MAKE ITS OWN DEAL WITH GOP. (EMBASSY
SUGGESTED TO ALL THREE, AND TO KIRVEN AND ANDERSON, THE
CONTACT AAMAUR AT SOME POINT WHILE IN WASHINGTON).

6. JAMES O'DONNELL OF AFGE SAID HE DID NOT GO TO WASHINGTON
BECAUSE AFGE NATIONAL INFORMED HIM THAT IT WILL INSIST ON
"A DOMINANT ROLE" FOR AFGE IN ANY TREATY-RELATED LABOR
DISCUSSIONS. O'DONNELL SAID AFGE, ALTHOUGH THEY DIVERGED
STRONGLY ON OTHER POINTS, FULLY SHARED AFSCME'S UNWILLINGNESS
TO SEE EO 11491 APPLIED HERE.

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 04267 02 OF 02 132330Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-14 INR-05 L-01 SAB-01 SSO-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PANAMA 4267

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7. COMMENT: TO SAY THAT AFSCME TRIP HAS STRUCK
CANAL ZONE LABOR SCENE LIKE A THUNDERBOLT MIGHT BE
OVERSTATING THE CASE--BUT NOT MUCH. THE AMERICAN-
CITIZEN UNIONS ARE ESPECIALLY FEARFUL OF THE
AFSCME CALL FOR "TOTAL EQUALITY". THEY AND NMU BOTH
CONSIDER DEVIATING FROM 1971 AFL-CIO PANCOM REPORT--
WHICH IS WHAT THEY SUSPECT AFSCME OF DOING--A SERIOUS
BREACH OF TRADE-UNION DISCIPLINE. BOTH GROUPS ARE
BITTERLY RESENTFUL THAT THE GOP IS ACCORDING
A PRIVILEGED INSIDE POSITION TO AFSCME WHILE THE USG
HAS LEFT THEM OUT IN THE COLD. THIS IS PARTICULARLY
NOTABLE IN LIOEANJI'S CASE. HE IS QUITE WILLING
TO DEAL WITH THE GOP IF AND AS POSSIBLE. BUT HE

WOULD GREATLY PREFER TO DEAL WITH THE USG.

8. JUST ABOUT ALL THE LABOR LEADERS AGREE THAT NO SINGLE ONE OF THEM COULD CREDIBLY BE NAMED LABOR'S INTERLOCUTOR WITH THE US NEGOTIATORS. THERE ARE IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES AMONG THEM OVER APPLICATION OF EO 11491, AND NO ONE ON THE "ANTI" SIDE OF THIS DISCUSSION WOULD LIKE TO SEE A "PRO" SO DESIGNATED. LIOEANJIIE TOLD LABOR OFFICER THAT THERE MUST BE A REPRESENTATIVE OF PANAMANIAN-CITIZEN UNIONS INVOLVED;
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 04267 02 OF 02 132330Z

NO US-CITIZEN UNION REPRESENTATIVE WOULD BE CREDIBLE TO NMU RANK-AND-FILE. US-CITIZEN UNIONS WILL ABSOLUTELY INSIST THAT PRINCIPAL SPOKESMAN BE AN AMERICAN. NOR WILL AFSCME WILLINGLY YIELD ITS CURRENT STATUS, EVEN THOUGH IT TOO WOULD GREATLY PREFER TO DEAL WITH THE USG IF IT COULD.

9. AFSCME HAS SERIOUSLY EXPOSED ITSELF BY THIS IDENTIFICATION WITH GOP NEGOTIATORS--IF THE TREATY ULTIMATELY FAILS TO CONTAIN AT LEAST A MINIMUM OF THE SORTS OF GUARANTEES IT IS SEEKING, ITS CREDIBILITY WILL DOUBTLESS SUFFER. BUT THE GOP HAS BY ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH AFSCME ALSO EXPOSED ITSELF TO A CHARGE OF "SELL-OUT" OF ITS CITIZENS IF IT DOES

NOT GET SOME GUARANTEES FOR THEM IN THE TREATY.

10. THE LINE WHICH US NEGOTIATORS HAVE TAKEN FOR YEARS--THAT LABOR PARTICIPATION WOULD BE SOLICITED AT SOME FUTURE -- HAS JUST RUN OUT OF STEAM IN THE CANAL ZONE LABOR FORCE. THE PANAMANIANIS ARE DEALING WITH ONE GROUP OF UNIONS ON LABOR ISSUES--A GROUP WHICH, PRIVATELY, WOULD PREFER TO DEAL

WITH THE USG BUT FEELS IT HAS HAD TO TURN BY DEFAULT TO THE GOP. THE MEDIA ARE SAYING THE TREATY TALKS ARE GOING WELL, THAT A "DRAFT TREATY" WILL BE READY SHORTLY. LABOR IN THE CANAL ZONE CONSIDERS THAT IT CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE THE CHANCE THAT THESE REPORTS ARE IN ERROR. WE BELIEVE THAT THE INSISTENCE OF LABOR LEADERS' DEMANDS TO BE ACTIVELY CONSULTED BY THE US NEGOTIATING TEAM AND TO HAVE THEIR CONCERNS DEALT WITH IN A "LABOR ANNEX" TO THE TREATY ITSELF, WILL REDOUBLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. INCREASINGLY, THEY WILL PROBABLY PRESS, THROUGH AFL-CIO AND PARENT UNIONS, TO BE HEARD, AND THEY WILL BE A GROWING SOURCE OF OPPOSITION AND TROUBLE UNTIL THEY PERCEIVE THAT THEIR VIEWS ARE BEING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED.

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